

Njerep language

Njerep (Njerup) is a Mambiloid language spoken in the Adamawa Region of Cameroon. Njerep is essentially extinct, with a handful who cannot speak it fully. Though word lists and grammatical information have been collected from these people, the information remains fragmented.

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	Njerep
Native to	Cameroon
Extinct	1998 ^[1] 6 rememberers (2000)^[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo - Atlantic–Congo - Benue–Congo - Mambiloid - Mambila–Konja Njerep
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	njr
Glottolog	njer1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/njer1242) ^[2]

General information

Njerep is considered a critically endangered language under the UNESCO language endangerment index. Research conducted in 2000 indicates that only six speakers of this language remain, all of whom reside in the Somié village located along the Nigeria-Cameroon border (6°28' N, 11° 27' E).^[1] Of these six speakers, only one remains conversant in the language. The others have been reported to be semi-speakers.^[1] The youngest of the speakers was born in the 1940s, and it appears unlikely that Njerep will survive past the current generation.^[3] Njerep is no longer a language of casual conversation. Instead, it is most often used for maintaining secrecy in conversation. According to a study in 2007, only four people spoke this language. All of them were elderly. ^[3] The Mambila language, also known as Mvop, has instead supplanted Njerep in casual use.^{[1][3]}

History of the Njerep people

Though the Njerep people currently reside in Somié village, it is widely understood that the Njerep immigrated to that location. Geographically, Somié village is located on the Tikar Plain of Cameroon. The approximately 2,500 inhabitants^[4] of Somié are not only Njerep, but also a wide variety of immigrant groups including the Liap, Ndeba, and Mvop people.^[5] Though oral accounts of how these groups immigrated to the Tikar plain are often contradictory, it appears that three or four waves of immigration led to the population of this area. It is likely that the Njerep people immigrated to the Tikar Plain from some region of the Adamawa Plateau,^{[3][5]} possibly from the Djeni Mountain (also shown as Aigue Mboundo on some maps).

Language affiliations

Njerep appears to be related to the extinct Kasabe, the extinct Yeni, and the endangered Twendi.^{[1][3]} Njerep appears to have been mutually intelligible with Kasabe, though not with Twendi.^[3]

Njerep falls under the broad classification of one of the Mambiloid languages. Mambila, the largest language in the Mambiloid grouping, has approximately twenty different dialects, loosely divided into East Mambila and West Mambila dialect clusters.^[4] Linguistic analysis suggests that Njerep may fall under the East Mambila cluster.^[1] However, it remains contested whether or not Njerep and its related languages should comprise its own unique grouping.

History of scholarship

Intense efforts to record and characterize Njerep began in 2000. However, by the year 2000, Njerep had already been in terminal decline for some time. Thus, knowledge of Njerep vocabularies and grammars remains quite fragmentary.^[1] Unfortunately, the lack of fluent speakers makes it unlikely that the incomplete record will ever be significantly amended.

Word lists and grammar

A comprehensive guide to Njerep vocabulary and grammar has been published and is freely available.^[1]

References

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Further reading

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External links

- Njerep profile at the Endangered Languages Project (<http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/533>)
 - Njerep profile at Ethnologue (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/njr>)
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